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Chairman: Mr. MROZIEWICZ (Poland)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: Let me begin our proceedings by extending a warm and sincere welcome to all delegations to the First Committee of the General Assembly. I have no doubt that we will work in the spirit of friendly and productive cooperation during the current session.

I should like to take this opportunity to express, on behalf of the members of the First Committee and on my own behalf, our most sincere congratulations to the Governments and peoples of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania, on their new membership in the United Nations. Members of the Committee warmly welcome the representatives of these new Members of the Organization, which enlarge and strengthen its universal scope, and look forward to working with them jointly in promoting the noble aims and ideals embodied in the Charter of the United Nations.

My election as Chairman of this body is a tribute to my country and to myself. My appreciation extends to all delegations for the confidence they have placed in me. I will endeavour to accomplish the tasks ahead in a manner that will justify the confidence and faith you have so generously bestowed upon me.

Let me say first of all how much I appreciate the very kind gesture extended to me by Mr. Mohan Bahadur Panday, Deputy Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations, when he nominated me at the first meeting of the Committee. I request him to be so kind as to convey, on behalf of the Committee and on my own behalf, our congratulations and gratitude to

(The Chairman)

Ambassador Jai Pratap Rana for the outstanding manner in which he presided over our deliberations at the forty-fifth session.

Since the forty-fifth session the international community has witnessed an unprecedented number of initiatives related to disarmament and international security. Those developments, which are to a large extent a reflection of some of the momentous events taking place in the improving international political climate, will likely set the tone of the debate and work of the Committee. It is my hope that the positive movement in the disarmament field since the forty-fifth session will act as a catalyst for further efforts to find areas of common understanding, to reach consensus in the drafting of resolutions, and to further the rationalization of the work of the Committee.

As I undertake my duties I will depend on the cooperation and assistance of the entire membership of the Committee as well as on the valuable experience, knowledge and competence of the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs, Mr. Vasiliy Safronchuk, and of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, and of course of the Secretary of the First Committee, Mr. Sohrab Kheradi, and his colleagues in the Secretariat, who will contribute greatly to the success of our work. It is my belief that the First Committee will profit from their experience, and we look forward to their support in dealing with the many significant issues before us.

I am fully aware that the tasks assigned to the First Committee are complex and multifaceted, but with your help, guidance and indulgence I intend to discharge the onerous responsibilities of my post with determination, devotion and impartiality in order to ensure that our work is conducted in an orderly fashion and that our endeavours will result in a successful conclusion.

ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIRMEN AND THE RAPPORTEUR

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to draw the Committee's attention to the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 1935th meeting on 22 September 1971 concerning the procedure for the election of officers of the Main Committees. According to the terms of that decision, the nominations of candidates should be limited to one statement for each candidate, after which the Committee should immediately proceed to the election. The Committee will therefore follow that procedure today.

Mr. NEUHAUS (Australia): On behalf of Australia, and in the absence of Mr. Ronald Morris, who was a Vice-Chairman last year, I have great pleasure in nominating the Permanent Representative of the Philippines, Mr. Sedfrey Ordonez, as Vice-Chairman of the First Committee at its forty-sixth session this year. Mr. Ordonez is a distinguished jurist and writer and has been his country's Solicitor-General and Secretary of Justice before his appointment here.

(Mr. Neuhaus, Australia)

I commend this nomination to the First Committee and would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Bureau and Secretariat for their assistance and to assure them of Australia's full cooperation in the work of the First Committee this year.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Australia for his statement nominating Ambassador Sedfrey A. Ordonez of the Philippines for the post of Vice-Chairman. I thank him for his kind remarks addressed to me. I wish to convey through him to Mr. Ronald S. Morris the Committee's appreciation for his valuable contribution to the work of the Committee in his capacity as Vice-Chairman during last year's session.

There being no other nominations, I shall take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and in keeping with established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with the vote by secret ballot and to declare Ambassador Sedfrey A. Ordonez elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

Mr. Sedfrey A. Ordonez (Philippines) was elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

Mr. MARTYNOV (Belarus) (interpretation from Russian): Mr. Chairman, first I should like to congratulate you sincerely on your election to this important and responsible post. I feel sure that you will successfully handle the difficult tasks assigned to you and that you will measure up to our hopes. I am particularly happy to congratulate the representative of a friendly neighbouring country with which Belarus has been linked for many centuries with the closest of ties.

Today, it is an honour and a pleasure for me to submit as a candidate for Vice-Chairman of the First Committee Mr. Ahmet Nazif Alpman. Mr. Alpman has

(Mr. Martynov, Belarus)

been a counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations since 1 January 1986. He has been a representative of Turkey in the First Committee since he came to work in New York. Disarmament and international security affairs are the issues with which he deals. Mr. Alpman completed studies at Strasbourg University in France in 1978 and began to work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. Until 1983, he held various positions within the Ministry and also in the Turkish Consulate in Los Angeles and in the Turkish Consulate in China. In 1985 he was First Secretary in the main division on political issues in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey in Ankara. In 1986 he was appointed Chef de Cabinet in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in his capital. That was a post which he held until he took up his present post in New York.

I believe that if elected as Vice-Chairman of the First Committee, he will certainly discharge most ably the tasks assigned to him.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Belarus for his statement nominating Mr. Ahmet Nazif Alpman of Turkey for the post of Vice-Chairman. I thank him also for the kind remarks he addressed to me. I do think that the centuries-old ties that he mentioned between Poland and Belarus are going to be strengthened in the near future. I wish to convey to him the Committee's deep appreciation for the distinction with which he carried out his duties as Vice-Chairman last year and for the valuable contribution he made to the Committee's work during that session.

There being no other nominations, I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and with established practice, the

(The Chairman)

Committee once again wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and declare Mr. Ahmet Nazif Alpman Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

Mr. Ahmet Nazif Alpman (Turkey) was elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN: May I express to the two Vice-Chairmen my warmest congratulations on the well deserved honour that has been conferred upon them and assure them that I am fully confident that we shall cooperate in a constructive and harmonious manner so that we may be able jointly to discharge the responsibilities incumbent upon us.

Mr. AFETA (Togo) (interpretation from French): Sir, I should like to join preceding speakers in extending to you, on behalf of the Togolese delegation and on behalf of Mr. Lawson-Betum, the outgoing Rapporteur, the warmest and most sincere congratulations on your election as Chairman of our Committee. We should also like to congratulate the two Vice-Chairmen whom we have just elected. We assure you of our full support and cooperation.

In a few moments we shall be electing the Rapporteur for this session. My delegation would like to recall that, given the complex nature of the work of the Rapporteur and particularly of the Rapporteur of such an important Committee as the First Committee, the candidate for the post should have a number of abilities and qualitites enabling him to discharge his mandate adequately. Accordingly, the Togolese delegation would like to nominate for election to the post of Rapporteur of the First Committee Mr. Pablo Emilio Sader, Minister Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations. He has a diploma in international law and international relations and is a career diplomat. Before occupying his current post, he had been, among other things, First

(Mr. Aféta, Togo)

Secretary at the Embassy of Uruguay in Paris from 1981 to 1986. He was the Deputy Director for Latin America in the Uruguayan Ministry for Foreign Affairs in 1988 and was Chef de Cabinet in the Foreign Ministry between 1988 and 1989. As members can see, Mr. Sader is a very able, talented and experienced diplomat. He has great experience and diplomatic skills and I feel that those will make him an excellent Rapporteur for this Committee. My delegation would appreciate it, Mr. Chairman, if you would give our proposal due consideration.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Togo for nominating Mr. Pablo Emilio Sader of Uruguay for election to the post of Rapporteur of the First Committee. I should like to thank him for the kind words he addressed to me. I wish to convey through him, to Mr. Lawson-Betum, the Committee's appreciation of the task he so ably performed as Rapporteur of the Committee during the forty-fifth session.

Members of the Committee have just heard the representative of Togo nominate Mr. Sader for the post of Rapporteur. As there are no other nominations, I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and in keeping with established practice, the Committee wishes as before to dispense with the vote by secret ballot and to declare Mr. Sader elected Rapporteur of the First Committee by acclamation.

Mr. Pablo Emilio Sader (Uruguay) was elected Rapporteur of the First Committee by acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to express my sincerest congratulations to the representative of Uruguay upon his election as Rapporteur of the First Committee, and I invite him now to take the place reserved for him on the podium.

May I at this time draw the attention of members of the Committee to rule 110 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which reads as follows:

> "Congratulations to the officers of a Main Committee shall not be expressed except by the Chairman of the previous session - or, in his absence, by a member of his delegation - after all the officers of the Committee have been elected."

Mr. ACHARYA (Nepal): Sir, it was an honour for my delegation to nominate you as Chairman of the First Committee at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, as well as on behalf of Ambassador Rana, on your assumption of this important position.

As my delegation said at the first meeting of the Committee, Mr. Chairman, you bring a unique combination of scholarship, experience and talent to the Committee. I wish to pay a tribute to your outstanding record as a scholar of diplomacy and international relations. As a representative of a country which has recently re-established its identity as a parliamentary democratic society with unequivocal commitment to protect and promote human rights, I have been greatly impressed by your consistent fight for democracy and human rights in Poland. Your struggle for the freedom of expression in your country is a source of inspiration to us all. We are convinced that with such a distinguished scholar, academician, politician and diplomat in the Chair, the First Committee is assured of very able leadership. The delegation

(Mr. Acharya, Nepal)

of Nepal is willing to extend any cooperation or assistance you may need to carry out your responsibilities.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Sedrey Ordonez of the Philippines and Mr. Ahmet Nazif Alpman on their election as Vice-Chairmen of the Committee. I should also like to congratulate Mr. Pablo Emilio Sader of Uruguay, who will serve as our Rapporteur. With such able members as officers of the Committee, my delegation is confident of the meaningful conclusion to the work of the First Committee at this session of the General Assembly.

It is my pleasure to convey to the members of the Committee, to the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Sohrab Kheradi, and to the officials of the Secretariat, the deep gratitude of Ambassador Jai Pratap Rana for the unfailing cooperation and support he received during his term as Chairman last year. At this meeting of the First Committee I do not intend to give an assessment of the work of the First Committee at its forty-fifth session. I wish, however, to express my hope that the Committee will be able to respond pragmatically to the important developments that have taken place since last November. The far-reaching changes that continue to take place on the international scene have not only transcended the traditional concept of the balance of power: they have also changed the concept of security on which it was based. The end of the cold war, the assertion of the authority of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, and the growing conviction that disputes can be resolved peacefully have opened new possibilities for arms control and disarmament. The important initiatives

(Mr. Acharya, Nepal)

taken by President Bush for further reductions in nuclear for the and for the scaling down of tensions have been matched by an equally positive response from President Gorbachev. We welcome the fact that these initiatives have come close on the heels of the signing of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). We also consider the announcement by China and France of their accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a very important development. The signing of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe is yet another important development. On the other hand, however, progress in the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a chemical weapons convention raises doubt about the possibility of concluding this much-awaited convention in 1992. Thus, while progress is being made on arms control and disarmament, many obstacles remain to be removed.

During this session of the General Assembly, the Committee will once again be dealing with the complex matters of disarmament and international security. We must do whatever we can in a consistent way to further our work so as to move closer to the cherished goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the officers of the Committee, as well as on my own behalf, I thank the representative of Nepal for his kind words addressed to me and to the other officers of the Committee. It is a great source of satisfaction to me that he has pledged his cooperation with, and support for, the officers of the Committee in the performance of our duties.

Mr. ORDONEZ (Philippines): Sir, it is a great privilege and honour to be elected as Vice-Chairman of the First Committee. For this, I wish to express my most sincere gratitude, as well as that of my country, the Philippines, to the members of the First Committee, and most especially to the representative of Australia, who so graciously nominated me. I am now

(Mr. Ordonez, Philippines)

more than ever determined to work with renewed vigour and dedication to reaffirm the faith that the Committee has entrusted to me, as well as to my country, which has long been committed to the goals of general and complete disarmament.

I wish therefore to complement the message of optimism voiced this afternoon by Ambassador Robert Mroziewicz of the Polish delegation. His elevation to this office is in keeping with the noble traditions so capably espoused by our past Chairman, Ambassador Pratap Rana of Nepal.

The First Committee is meeting at a time when the breathtaking pace of political and technological developments in the world continues to outstrip the cautious pace of government policy responses to these events. At the same time, the international community is seriously and steadfastly transforming its rhetoric on peace, security, and equality into more tangible and positive acts of cooperation. The First Committee's response to the circumstances will undoubtedly play a very important and significant role in mankind's quest for collective security under a new order based on the rule of international law.

(Mr. Ordonez, Philippines)

I am therefore very pleased, Mr. Chairman, to see you steering the deliberations of our Committee at this critical juncture of history. As a distinguished diplomat and noted scholar of the history of diplomacy and international relations you possess the traits and qualifications necessary to guide us in our complex work.

I also wish to extend my congratulations to Mr. Ahmet Nazif Alpman of Turkey on his election as Vice-Chairman and to Mr. Pablo Emilio Sader of Uruguay on his election as Rapporteur.

I shall work very closely with you, Mr. Chairman, and with the other members of the Bureau - of course, under the effective guidance of the Under-Secretaries-General, Mr. Vasiliy S. Safronchuk and Mr. Yasushi Akashi, and with the able assistance of Mr. Sohrab Kheradi, the Committee Secretary.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of the Philippines, Ambassador Sedrey A. Ordonez, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, for the kind words he addressed to me. I wish fully to reciprocate those sentiments. I am confident I can count on his very active assistance and cooperation.

Mr. ALPMAN (Turkey): At the outset, I should like to convey to you, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of Turkey, our warmest congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. We are particularly pleased to see you, a most eminent representative of your country, Poland - with which Turkey has historically maintained the best of relations - presiding over the proceedings of this important Committee. I wish to assure you of my delegation's full support as you discharge your task as Chairman in the weeks ahead.

(Mr. Alpman, Turkey)

I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Sedrey Ordonez of the Philippines on his election to the post of Vice-Chairman of the Committee and to Mr. Pablo Emilio Sader of Uruguay on his election to the post of Rapporteur.

Regarding my election as one of the two Vice-Chairmen, I should like to thank all delegations for their confidence and for the honour they have bestowed upon me. I consider this a tribute to my country's dedication to the principles of the United Nations.

It was also a pleasure to have been nominated by Mr. Sergei Nikolaievich Martynov of Belarus, a distinguished colleague whose contribution to the work of the First Committee as a Vice-Chairman last year is well known to all delegations. I thank him for his kind remarks. I will do my best to live up to the Committee's expectations.

I also look forward to working together in the coming weeks with the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Sohrab Kheradi, and his able team. Their valuable contribution to the work of the Committee is always appreciated.

As a last word, I wish to convey my delegation's condolences on the sudden loss of Mr. Jack Gerardi-Siebert to the Under-Secretary-General and, through him, to the bereaved family of the deceased. His untimely death has caused great sorrow to us all.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Turkey, Mr. Ahmet Nazif Alpman, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, for the kind remarks he addressed to me. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Turkey and Poland had many wars, but since then we have become best friends, as we still are. So maybe those wars were necessary.

(The Chairman)

I look forward to Mr. Alpman's active cooperation, and I am confident that I can count on his assistance.

Mr. SADER (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): First of all, Sir, I should like to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the Committee. Your well-known qualities inspire confidence that your leadership will be most effective. You can count on the willingness of my delegation to cooperate with you and with the Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Sedrey A. Ordonez of the Philippines and Mr. Ahmet Nazif Alpman of Turkey. I have had the privilege of working with them, and I take this opportunity to congratulate them most sincerely.

I want also to thank the representative of Togo for nominating me to the post of Rapporteur. Last year's Rapporteur, Mr. Lawson-Betum, played a very important role in the work of the Committee.

I thank all previous speakers for their words of welcome, and I thank all members of the First Committee for the trust they have placed in the delegation of my country and in me personally. I am honoured to have been elected to the post of Rapporteur. I am highly conscious of the heavy burdens of that post, and I shall spare no effort to live up to the honour that has been conferred upon me.

My delegation thanks the Secretariat for the splendid job they have done in this Committee and elsewhere. I particularly thank Mr. Safronchuk and Mr. Akashi, and Mr. Kheradi, the Committee Secretary. I thank the Secretariat in advance for the cooperation I am sure will be forthcoming as we go about our tasks.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank Mr. Pablo Emilio Sader of Uruguay, Rapporteur of the Committee, for his generous remarks and for his expression of willingness to cooperate closely with me and the other Committee officers. I am certain that I express not only my own feelings but also those of the two Vice-Chairmen and of the Committee secretariat when I say that it is our intention to work in close co-operation with him during the current session.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: At the outset, may I draw the attention of delegations to document A/C.1/46/1, containing a letter dated 20 September 1991 addressed to me by the President of the General Assembly, informing me that the General Assembly decided at its 3rd meeting to allocate 22 items to the First Committee for its consideration, namely agenda items 47 to 68.

Despite the short time I have had at my disposal and in keeping with previous practice, and assisted by the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Sohrab Kheradi, I undertook informal consultations with individual delegations, to the extent possible, concerning our programme of work and timetable. In addition, members will recall that on 7 October, in the course of our informal consultations, I sought and received ad referendum agreement concerning that programme.

Before I proceed to give a fuller account of the programme of work and timetable that are being proposed, I should like to provide some preliminary explanations. First of all, as members are all aware, according to established practice, the First Committee commences its substantive work only after the conclusion of the general debate in the Assembly.

(The Chairman)

Furthermore, the President of the General Assembly appealed to the Chairmen of the Main Committees to conclude their Committees' work by the end of November 1991 in order to enable the Assembly to consider in plenary meeting the reports of the Main Committees during the early part of December.

(The Chairman)

Hence, the time frame within which the Committee will need to complete its very substantial work, namely, the period extending from 14 October to 27 November, has emerged logically and rather inevitably from the developments and considerations to which I have just referred. The Committee will thus have at its disposal a maximum of 66 meetings to consider the agenda items before it. Here, I would like to point out that last year the Committee utilized a total of 50 meetings, and therefore I think that if we make a concerted and sincere attempt to utilize our resources in an effective manner, we can indeed accomplish our task without any undue difficulties. In that connection, I would like to express the hope that everything possible will be done to avoid the necessity for any weekend or night meetings, since that would defeat the very rationale for encapsulating the Committee's proceedings into the rather shorter period of time within which we have to complete the large volume of work before us. One way of doing this would be to focus our attention, in the course of our statements, on the main points under consideration.

Following the consultations to which I referred earlier, and drawing upon the experience that has evolved over the years, I have arrived at the proposed programme of work and timetable which is set forth in document A/C.1/46/5 and to which I now draw the Committee's attention. It will be observed that consideration of items allocated to the First Committee would proceed in three main clusters, namely, those dealing with disarmament items - agenda items 47 to 65; the question of Antarctica - agenda item 66; and international security items - agenda items 67 and 68.

At this stage, I would like to add that, as in the past, precise deadlines have been set with respect to the submission of draft resolutions under the three groupings. Here, it may be pertinent to mention that,

(The Chairman)

wherever possible, I have set deadlines at as early a stage as has been considered feasible in order to allow sufficient time for delegations to undertake the necessary consultations before proceeding to take action upon the draft resolutions concerned.

As indicated in the programme of work and timetable, the First Committee would first take up agenda items relating to disarmament issues, namely, agenda items 47 to 65. With respect to those items, my proposal is to devote the period from Monday, 14 October, to Friday, 15 November 1991 - or a maximum of 50 meetings - to general debate, consideration of and action upon agenda items 47 to 65. That period would be divided as follows.

From Monday, 14 October to Wednesday, 30 October, the Committee would carry on a general debate on all disarmament agenda items. A total of 26 meetings have been devoted to that phase of our work. The period from Thursday, 31 October, to Friday, 15 November, would then be devoted to consideration of and action upon draft resolutions on all disarmament agenda items submitted to the Committee, providing a total of 24 meetings. I believe that the period set aside for that phase of our work provides sufficient time for delegations to consider and consult upon the draft resolutions so as to ensure that the texts finally adopted reflect the greatest possible degree of consensus.

The deadline for the submission of draft resolutions on disarmament agenda items would be Monday, 28 October 1991, at 6 p.m., and it is my intention to request the cooperation of representatives in adhering strictly to that deadline. Delegations are strongly encouraged to submit and introduce their draft resolutions as early as possible. Furthermore, it is imperative that delegations submit those draft resolutions that would entail programme budget implications as early as possible in order to meet the mandatory

(The Chairman)

deadline for submission to the Fifth Committee of all draft resolutions with financial implications.

It is my intention to retain the voting procedure involving the grouping of draft resolutions by clusters during this session, and in due time I shall be presenting specific proposals concerning this matter.

After concluding consideration of all disarmament agenda items, the Committee would then proceed to take up agenda item 66 - the question of Antarctica. We would devote the period of 18 to 20 November - a total of six meetings - to a general debate on, consideration of and action upon any draft resolutions under that item. The deadline for submission of draft resolutions under that item would be Monday, 18 November, at 12 noon.

Finally, during the period from Thursday, 21 November to Wednesday, 27 November 1991, we should proceed to consideration of the remaining agenda items - items 67 and 68 - relating to international security. A total of 10 meetings would thus be available for a general debate on, consideration of and action upon draft resolutions under those agenda items. Once again, I believe that, on the basis of previous experience, the time allocated for consideration of those items will provide adequate opportunities for consultations among delegations before action is taken by the Committee on those items.

The deadline for submission of draft resolutions on international security items would be Monday, 25 November 1991 at 6 p.m. In this connection, I should once again like to alert members to the importance of meeting the deadline set for the submission to the Fifth Committee of all draft resolutions with programme budget implications, especially since at that stage the Committee would be nearing the conclusion of its work.

(The Chairman)

On the basis of the programme of work and the timetable now before the Committee, it is my belief that we would be in a position to dispose of all the agenda items allocated to us within the available time and to conclude our work effectively by 27 November.

I should like to conclude my remarks concerning the Committee's programme of work and timetable by reminding delegations of the need to maintain the requisite degree of flexibility in the process of implementing that programme but, of course, only to the extent that this would enhance the effectiveness of our organization of our work.

If there is no objection, may I take it that the Committee agrees with the suggested programme of work and timetable as contained in document A/C.1/46/5?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like now to draw the attention of the Committee to decision 34/401 of the General Assembly affecting the work of the Main Committees, in particular to its provisions dealing with explanations of vote, rights of reply, budgetary and financial questions, which I intend to apply with the co-operation of all members of the Committee. In order to make full use of the time and facilities available to the Committee, I intend to open the meetings of the Committee at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. and shall endeavour to close the meetings at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. respectively, subject to any further decision of the General Assembly.

At the same time, I wish to point out that it is my intention to convene meetings of the Committee when a sufficient number of speakers are on the list. I believe that, as a general rule, we should have no fewer than four speakers inscribed on the list for a given meeting, so that we can utilize the time and resources available to us in the most effective manner possible and in order to obviate the need to close our meetings early for lack of speakers. Resources allocated to a meeting cancelled at an appropriate time may be released for other meetings held within or outside the framework of the First Committee.

At this juncture, I call on the Secretary of the Committee to explain in greater detail certain matters pertaining to the proceedings of the First Committee.

Mr. KHERADI (Secretary of the Committee): I should like to draw the Committee's attention to the following points.

I should like to inform the members of the Committee that this year, once again, the General Assembly has recommended that the requirement of the presence of one-quarter of the members to declare a meeting of a Main Committee open and permit the debate to proceed be waived. The Assembly made

(Mr. Kheradi)

that recommendation on the understanding that such a waiver would not involve any permanent change in the provisions of rules 67 and 108 of the rules of procedure. Furthermore, such a waiver would not affect the provisions of the rules concerning the requirement of the presence of a majority of the members for any decision to be taken.

I should like to request members of the Committee to kindly submit draft resolutions, especially those draft resolutions which have programme budget implications, as far in advance as possible. This would allow sufficient time for the preparation by the Secretariat of the estimate of expenditures and for its consideration by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and by the Fifth Committee, and would provide enough time for members of the Committee for consultations and, if need be, for seeking the necessary instructions.

In addition, it would be appreciated if members of the Committee would submit draft resolutions and amendments, and the names of sponsors thereof, to the Secretariat in writing, in order to ensure accuracy and avoid any possible misunderstanding. Requests for the use of conference services for group or regional meetings should also be submitted in writing as early as possible so that the necessary arrangments may be made on time.

Delegations are requests to provide Conference Services with 30 copies of a statement when a prepared text is to be delivered for the use of the technical services, in addition to the copies that may be required for distribution to delegations.

In accordance with the Committee's programme of work and timetable, which has just been approved by the Committee, the list of speakers for the general

(Mr. Kheradi)

debate on all disarmament agenda items will be closed on Tuesday, 15 October 1991, at 6 p.m. Several delegations have already indicated their intention to participate in the general debate on disarmament items, and the secretariat has taken note of those requests.

In order to enable the Committee to fully utilize the conference resources as well as to make rational use of the time available to the Committee, all delegations are requested to inscribe their names on the list of speakers at their earliest convenience.

I should like to draw the attention of all members of the Committee to document A/C.1/46/INF.1, which will be available by Monday, 14 October 1991. It will list, as in previous years, for the purpose of information and ready reference, all documents before the First Committee issued as of 10 October 1991. That list will be updated periodically, as appropriate.

Mr. Chairman, may I take this opportunity to extend to you and to the entire membership of the Committee my fullest assurances that the secretariat of the First Committee will do its utmost to ensure that the work and the proceedings of the Committee proceed in as smooth and effective a manner as possible.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, with your indulgence and that of the members of the Committee, I would, at this stage, like to refer to a tragic event that has deeply saddened us all, as has already been noted by the newly-elected Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Ahmet Nazim Alpman.

It was with great sorrow that we learned last week that Mr. Jack Gerardi-Siebert, a staff member in the Department of Disarmament Affairs, had passed away at the age of 37.

(Mr. Kheradi)

Mr. Gerardi-Siebert had joined the Department in 1986 and served as a member of the secretariat of the First Committee for the past several years and also served with great distinction in various other capacities.

Jack was a friend and colleague who was well known to many who are present here today. He fulfilled his tasks and responsibilities with a sense of dedication, diligence and integrity. He will be remembered as a man of compassion and humour, one whose actions were characterized by an unconquerable spirit of vitality, enthusiasm and courage. I would like to conclude this tribute to the memory of Jack Gerardi-Siebert by stating that he was, indeed, a devoted staff member who strongly believed in the ideals and principles of the United Nations.

The CHAIRMAN: I would now like to turn to the question of rationalizaton of the work of the First Committee, a subject that has occupied the attention of the Committee for quite a number of years. In analytical terms, one could point out that there are two major dimensions to the issue.

First, there are matters concerning structural, organizational and logistical aspects that can be applied in an effective and efficient manner, conducive to the better utilization of the Committee's available resources in terms of conference facilities.

(The Chairman)

As far as this aspect is concerned, I am sure that we are all in agreement that in spite of the fact that the First Committee deals with perhaps the largest number of agenda items of any Main Committee, and in spite of the fact that the Committee begins its substantive work only after conclusion of the general debate in the Assembly, the Committee has over the years always succeeded in concluding its work within the allotted time-frame.

The second aspect of the question of rationalization is what I would characterize as the more substantive aspect and pertains to the number of agenda items inscribed and the number of draft resolutions adopted. With respect to this aspect, worthwhile efforts have been expended in the past several years, and tangible, though limited, results have been achieved. Furthermore, in view of the growing importance that this issue has also assumed in the context of the overall General Assembly reforms, it is now perhaps incumbent upon us to pursue the matter even more vigorously and in a more concerted fashion than before. I shall have occasion to expand on this matter at subsequent stages of our work. Suffice it, for now, to inform you that, with your cooperation, it will be my intention to address this issue strenuously and to strive for appropriate, but concrete, results.

In connection with the rationalization of work in one particular area, members will recall that the practice of grouping draft resolutions into different clusters when taking action on them has proved extremely efficacious. Accordingly, it will be my intention to continue that useful practice. However, from a substantive point of view, an even more important aspect of rationalization is the question of finding broader areas of agreement on the draft resolutions the Committee adopts. The issue, as we are all aware, while of great importance, is of course also a complex one.

(The Chairman)

Nevertheless, we will need to strive in our deliberations to do our utmost to make a joint effort to narrow the gap between divergent viewpoints wherever possible. It is my belief that given today's positive international climate this is within the realm of practical reality and also that in so doing we will contribute significantly to our mutual interest and common security. Accordingly, it will be my intention to convene at an early stage of our proceedings an open-ended group of friends of the Chair to explore the further ramifications of this issue.

Finally, I should also like to take this opportunity to remind you that Disarmament Week and the Ninth Pledging Conference for the World Disarmament Campaign will take place on 29 October 1991 at 10.30 a.m. It is envisaged that the observance of Disarmament Week will be marked by statements from the Chairman of the First Committee, the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. They will be followed immediately by the Pledging Conference.

If no delegation wishes to make any comments or remarks at this stage, I propose to adjourn the meeting now. As decided, the Committee will begin its substantive work on Monday, 14 October, at 10.00 a.m.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.